

Project Initiation Document

Project Name: [Title]

Project Code: [To Be Assigned Upon Project Initiation]



Objective:

[This should be consistent with the project title in the project tracker.]

Agency, cross-agency, or Administration priority:

[Briefly note the connection to the agency Strategic Plan, performance target, Learning Agenda, Annual Evaluation Plan, or other record of agency, cross-agency, or Administration priority (e.g., covid-19, economic recovery, racial equity, climate change).]

Potential impact:

[Describe in a few sentences how the results of the project could directly affect a federal program or policy, the potential impact for stakeholders, and the possibility for scale.]

Behavioral barriers:

[This should include a basic process map, where you identify points that the project will seek to understand further. Briefly describe how behavioral barriers will be diagnosed, and your understanding of the process that will be improved through this project. Preliminary ideas about specific behavioral barriers are welcome but not required at this stage. If ideas about specific barriers are available, then include any information that might be available about the potential impact of removing those barriers. You should give some thought to where an intervention will have the greatest impact in the causal chain and how sticky behaviors may be.]

Intervention design plan:

[Briefly describe the plan for designing an intervention based on what is learned about behavioral barriers. Preliminary ideas about specific interventions are welcome but not required at this stage.]

Cost of the intervention:

[Is the intervention expected to have no or low cost? Will estimating its cost – one-time, ongoing, or both – be important? If so, what will be required to conduct an adequate cost analysis?]

Evaluation feasibility:

[Describe the tentative design of the evaluation, including any available information about sample size and statistical power, and any challenges to its feasibility. Detailed power calculations are **not** required at this point, but we want to ensure that adequate power is reasonably likely based on what is known so far.]

Data availability:

[Note the ultimate target outcome. Include a brief description of the datasets that measure this outcome. If it is not possible to access this data, describe the alternative, and why it will be a good proxy. In addition to outcome data, will cost data be required and available?]

Results utilization:

[Briefly describe the intended utilization for the results. For example, is the project worthwhile on its own merits (e.g., not scaled or iterated)? What will be required for the agency partner to successfully utilize results (e.g., scale-up, policy change, additional funds)? Some helpful questions include:

- Who within the partner agency will need to be informed, and whose support will be needed?
- What are the cost implications?
- Are there important deadlines or other aspects of timing that will influence decision making?

For this section it may be helpful to describe utilization goals for the range of expected outcomes (e.g., null, negative, positive effect).]

Results dissemination:

[Briefly describe tentative plans for dissemination, including potential audiences and outlets. Note whether any of the potential outlets have requirements that require early planning (e.g., academic journals that require pre-registration).]

Project roles:

[Note who makes key approval decisions and decisions about scale at the agency. If academic affiliates, contractors, or other implementing partners are involved, briefly describe their roles.]

Project agreements:

Will the project need any of the following?

- IRB approval or documentation of exemption
- PRA approval
- Data-sharing agreement (DSA)
- Other special agreement: _____

Risk points:

Are there elements necessary for this project to be successful that are not assured and need specific attention?

The following items are determined at the Project Initiation discussion

Project criteria checklist

Criterion	Y / N	Notes (if not strong Y)
Connection of outcome measure to agency priority / relevance of findings for others in government/high impact		
Behavioral barrier/challenge can be addressed by OES expertise		
Federal touchpoint where OES expertise applies, feasibility to implement program change		
Ability to utilize existing administrative data		
Feasibility of rigorous experimental design, including random assignment		
Ability to come to statistically significant findings (adequate sample size)		
Meet criteria for High Impact Project (scale 1-5)		

Outcome of Project Initiation discussion:

Will the project move forward? Yes No

What issues need to be tracked and resolved? These are issues that could limit the feasibility or impact of the project. For each of these issues, what does successful resolution look like?

Issue	What is required to resolve this issue?
